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ABSTRACT

This report recounts the experiences of an Australian librarian who spent five months in England, where she visited the University of London and the Open University for discussions on library services to external students in order to: (1) gain practical knowledge of the work and responsibilities of the Open University Liaison Librarians and their assistance in the preparation of teaching materials; (2) gain an understanding of the library networks established for and used by distance education students; and (3) do research on the development of library services to teaching staff and students of noncredit university courses designed solely as continuing education (i.e., extramural) units. The librarian also visited 15 university departments of continuing education, 11 other academic libraries, and 7 public libraries, and contacted many British librarians through seminars, professional groups, and committees. This report describes her findings and discusses the applicability of some of the features of the British system to the situation in Australia. A discussion of the future of library support services for distance education students in Australia concludes the report. A list of the institutions visited in Great Britain is appended. (28 references) (SD)

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Number 11

Library Support for Extramural Education in Britain

A report based on a five month visit to Britain as the James Cook Bicentenary Scholar, 1984-85

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July 1987

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Number 11

LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR EXTRAMURAL EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

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INTRODUCTION

The James Cook Bicentenary Scholarship is offered on a biennial basis to a librarian from Australia or New Zealand. It is funded entirely by B.H. Blackwell of Oxford.

As a candidate for the Scholarship, I based my application on the growing need for a better understanding into support services required from libraries for distance education and/or continuing education (extramural) courses.

I explained that the development of off-campus teaching in Australian tertiary institutions had been rapid, and that the effort to obtain student numbers usually resulted in poor support services and inadequate library services.

Interest had been raised in library services required for successful distance education in Australia, with the Winter and Cameron (1983) study,' and the publication of the Library Association of Australia *Guidelines* (1982), as well as the increasingly relaxed attitudes of tertiary libraries towards borrowing privileges for distance education students.

I feel that librarians could participate a great deal more than is current practice, in the design and preparation of distance education course materials, co-operating with the teaching staff to ensure maximum use of available library resources. I believe that professional involvement at the time of course preparation would help not only to ensure availability of resources, but would also result in reduced involvement of qualified library staff in the loan process.

In addition, many Australian institutions offer non-credit courses - continuing education - to on- and off-campus students. These courses cover topics as diverse as the latest technology in dental work to appreciation of Australian bush ballads. The tertiary library's role in this area remains undefined.

In fulfilment of my scholarship I spent five months in Britain where I visited the University of London and the Open University for discussions on library services to external students. I also visited fifteen university departments of continuing education, eleven other tertiary libraries and seven public libraries (a list of the institutions visited is given in the Appendix). In addition, I contacted many more librarians through seminars, professional groups and committees.

My main objectives were:

(a) to gain practical knowledge of the work and responsibilities of the Open University Liaison Librarians and their assistance in the preparation of teaching materials; and to gain knowledge of the library networks established for, and used by, distance education students;

and

(b) to research the development of library services to teaching staff and students of university courses designed solely as continuing education (extramural) units, with no accreditation towards a university degree.

1 DISTANCE EDUCATION

The University of London and the Open University enrol distance education students for credit. In some other universities, the continuing education, or extramural departments have started offering diploma courses to distance students but this is only in a peripheral way.

1.1 University of London

The University of London has approximately 20,000 external students half of which are overseas, resident particularly in Malaysia and Africa. The University formally provides a syllabus and an examination paper; study notes exist but vary from the rudimentary to the sophisticated. Summer schools are held at various locations in Britain and are usually attended by the Secretary for External Students. Some counselling is carried out by academic staff, though there appears very little time for true academic counselling.

The University of London's external system really does affirm the validity of self-acquired knowledge; it is an examining and not a teaching body and as such assumes that its students will seek and be granted access to adequate library facilities. The University Library offers a postal service, but only on extremely limited scope. Through tradition, rather than as a result of any firm action from the University, students seem to gain access to and borrowing privileges from their local academic library. In 1982, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* saw the University of London system as 'a route to high and specialised knowledge' which students can follow:

> ... if they have access to books and sometimes certain other material and if they are possessed of the qualities of intelligence, determination and an almost obstinate persistence...
> (Sassoon, 1982, p.10)

It was difficult to determine the extent of postal loans to external students from the University of London central Library, as these separate statistics are not recorded by the Library. Members of Convocation are also able to borrow by post, and external loans, convocation loans and inter-library loans are simply grouped together in the Library's annual statistics.

Students must know the bibliographic details of the book required, and pay delivery and return costs for each parcel. There is difficulty in meeting requests for non-stock items, as well as requests for items classed as 'reference only' within the Library. No multiple copies are bought by the Library to cope with postal loans.

The Library has 35,000 registered borrowers. In 1982-83 postal loans totalled 4,613 and in 1983-84 they totalled 4,132. Of the 1983-84 figure, 3,279 can be identified as inter-library loans.

The Library produces a brochure on the services available to external students. This brochure was prepared as an introductory guide to library services available throughout Britain, rather than as a guide to those available from the University of London. It gives some information on postal loans, accompanied by some rules and regulations governing how those requests

must be made. Students resident in London are fortunate as there are over sixty libraries in the colleges and institutions of the University, and many admit external students on special application. Students are encouraged to make use of local library services, and the brochure gives some indication of these, including subscription libraries around the country, such as that at Harrods, the department store.

It is worth quoting from the introductory note to this brochure:

> A student who is working for a degree examination of the university will require access to one or more libraries from which he may borrow, or in which he may consult, essential books. In Great Britain little difficulty exists in obtaining access to a library service ... Nothing can take the place of a good reference library, and every student is urged to make the fullest possible use of any library of this kind to which he may be able to obtain access ... Text books alone, however, are inadequate for any course of study, certainly for any course leading to a university degree, and a student who is unable to have access to good library facilities must realise that he is working at a very grave disadvantage.
> (p.2)

The University of London Library has 'well over one million volumes'. External students are limited to six volumes on loan at a time, and are reminded that it is not the policy of the Library to acquire multiple copies of books required for courses. Some items, including periodicals, are not available for loan.

Differences in the model of teaching and in library services between the University of London and Australian tertiary institutions enrolling external students are significant, and make any true comparison invalid. However, it would appear that the University of London Library has little contact with external students, and even less inclination to encourage their use of the postal library service.

1.2 Open University

Mr Simpson, Chief Librarian at the Open University, carefully emphasised to me that the Library was set up and funded to serve the academic staff of the University only; this echoes his statement in the early days of the Open University, when he presented a paper to an Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux (ASLIB) meeting.

> It's chief function is to serve the Academic staff at Headquarters ... The Library will provide the usual University Library services, plus some that are more common in special libraries ... We hope to recruit subject specialists who will provide a current awareness service and undertake searches in the literature and media of various subjects as required. We wish to provide active, rather than passive, services, after the manner of special libraries ... Students will be advised to approach Public Libraries, and other local sources, for the Recommended Books.
> (Simpson, 1970, p.63)

In 1973 Mr Simpson asserted that because Open University students received such well prepared course materials, their need for additional library resources was limited. However, even then he conceded that at third and fourth level courses 'the scene changes' and those students would need 'to work actively' with the literature of their subjects. 'This requires access to a library suited to academic research and strong in holdings of bibliographies, indexes and abstracting services' (Simpson, 1973, pp.174-5).

He acknowledged then that comparatively few public library authorities offered this kind of service. Remember that this was in 1973, when one in 1,330 people in Britain was enrolled at the Open University (Simpson, 1973, p.175), and when most public libraries enjoyed less financial restrictions than exist now.

At our meeting Mr Simpson related the history behind 'picture searching' in the Open University Library. Sheila Dale, Chief Liaison Librarian, has defined picture searching as 'locating and obtaining required items, the associated copyright clearance, progression of items through the Open University system, liaison with appropriate personnel e.g. author, designer, editor, and assistance with resource bids' (Dale, 1982, p.2). In the early days of the Open University's development, Mr Simpson responded to a need expressed at a senior level meeting. There, a member of a course team wanted an additional person to locate suitable illustrations for course materials; Mr Simpson declared that the professional library staff could take on this role. Picture searching is therefore 'the function on which the Liaison Group was funded', (Dale, 1978, p.320); it has priority over all other work.

In 1978, Sheila Dale gave a break-down of the time that the Open University Liaison Librarian spent on various tasks and she indicated then that 'some people were committing almost seventy-five per cent of their time' to picture searching (p.321). Below is a summary of the time allocated by the Liaison Librarians to all tasks.

Table 1: Summary of Liaison Librarian Time Use

Activity	% of Time Allocated	
	1982	1976
Picture Searching	46.2	40.9
Guides to use of libraries and literature	12.4	13.8
Bibliographies/literature searches	10.05	11.6
Current awareness	7.4	8.3
General activities, incl. professional development	5.3	8.1
Administration	5.0	1.9
Assisting individuals	4.5	9.5
Reading course materials	4.41	4.4
Attending course team/faculty meetings	4.35	5.4
Technology cuttings	1.1	1.1

Source: Information taken from internal papers, Open University Library

In 1983, Mr Simpson gave the following figures for picture searches made by the Liaison Librarians.

Table 2: Summary of Picture Searches

Year	No. of Pictures Sought	No. of Approaches Made	No. of Pictures Used
1980	2,259	1,463	1,445
1981	2,952	2,742	2,035
1982	3,805	3,342	2,695
1983	5,367	4,492	3,773

Source: Open University Library (1983) *Annual Report*, p.12

Over that four year period, of the pictures originally sought by course teams, only sixty-nine per cent were used. In a discussion with a former Open University course editor, I learned that this practice of picture searching was regarded by some academics as a waste of professional library time, and a task that could be better handled by a central agency. She felt that this would be a quicker and more cost effective way of obtaining suitable photographs and the necessary clearance for their re-use in course materials.

Some library staff also expressed some professional resentment at the large proportion of time spent with the purely clerical details pertaining to picture searching.

In the time that I spent with Sheila Dale, it became very obvious that the role of the professional library staff within the Open University had not changed greatly, despite a fifteen year development period. In her 1978 summary of staff time, she concluded:

> The remaining service, which is taking an ever increasing amount of our time is the preparation of guides to the use of libraries and literature related to the courses being produced.
> (p.321)

At that time, concern for library services available to the students seemed almost an afterthought for the Library, and with Liaison Librarians participating on the course writing teams of each faculty, she nevertheless felt:

> We could play a more positive role in the compilation of recommended reading lists.
> (p.326)

This statement seemed just as true in 1985, and was the main reason for my ceasing to pursue the role of the Liaison Librarians on course teams. I believe (and have preached that belief for a number of years) that a professional librarian, **fully** participating in the preparation of course materials, can prepare students for locating and using relevant library materials.

The Open University operates completely by course teams; the librarians often do not attend course team meetings as they are 'too busy'. When they do attend, they may feel that they are not qualified to comment on the structure or content of the course. In a university where

the library staff exist purely to provide services to academic staff, this can perhaps be interpreted as a sad reflection on their choice of staff. The Liaison Group is divided into subject specialists, and those subject specialists serve on the relevant course teams. Their lack of input, and lack of confidence made me feel it was not profitable to pursue the role of Liaison Librarians on Open University course teams. The fact that a great deal of their time is spent in picture searching was another deterrent; this was not a professional responsibility I wanted to import to Australia.

Table 3: Open University Library Services

	Services Provided by Liaison Librarians to ---------→	Course teams	Other Groups e.g. Faculty, IET, Research Groups, Publishing	Individuals
1	Picture search for printed course materials - including locating and obtaining required items, the associated copyright clearance, progression of items through the Open University system and liaison with appropriate personnel, eg. author, editor, designer.	X		
2	Preparation of guides to the use of libraries and literature for students, as part of course materials.	X		
3	Assistance with resource bids re 1 & 2 above.	X		
4	Current awareness - notification of selected recent relevant publications.	X	X	X
5	Library guides for Faculties explaining Open University library facilities.		X	
6	Preparation of bibliographies for Course Teams for course production and library stock-building.	X		
7	Literature searches for individuals (a) manual and (b) computer.	X	X	X
8	Assistance to individual enquirers.	X	X	X
9	General advice to Course Teams on external library resources/problems eg. re Project courses.	X		
10	Technology cuttings service.	X	X	X
11	Induction talks on the Open University Library.	X	X	X
12	Training for editors in bibliographical checking and Open University library systems.		X	
13	Training in library systems and basic library use for secretaries (temporarily suspended).		X	
14	Commentary, where appropriate, on course materials.	X		

Source: Information supplied by Sheila Dale, Open University Library

The Library staff produce guides to libraries and literature on a course basis. In a 1982 internal paper, Sheila Dale wrote 'The highest demand for guides to be written in any one year was ten ... The annual average is 4.3' (p.2). By March 1985, sixty guides had been produced

by Liaison Librarians, and of those, nine were revisions of earlier editions. Four more were produced by external consultants. These guides are subject related and quite extensive. They are sold as part of the Open University's commercial publication programme. Unfortunately, their print-runs seem very limited and demand often exceeds supply. Use and understanding of the guides have never been evaluated; nor has there been any comprehensive attempt to gather information on student use of libraries and resources.

It may have been appropriate in 1969, to develop a university library service for only the academic staff of the institution; but change occurs all the time and in librarianship many changes have resulted from altered priorities of the clientele and consequent changes in library management and direction. Now, with a considerable growth and development in Open University courses, the somewhat static role of the Library has been questioned within the Open University itself, particularly with the University's increasing involvement in higher degree learning packages. This is especially interesting, in view of the concern among Australian librarians about services offered to off-campus postgraduate students. I attended a meeting of the Programme Board of Masters of Education, at the Dean's invitation, to participate in discussion on library services to postgraduate students. The Board was particularly concerned that students enrolled in masters programmes require access to current journal literature; indeed, this requirement is a component for the successful completion of their course. The staff present at that meeting were very interested to learn of photocopying services provided by Australian libraries, particularly a voucher-payment service which is relatively easy to administer, and yet covers actual costs and some labour costs. They decided to recommend to the University Librarian that the Open University begin to offer this type of service to isolated postgraduate students in Britain.

With some academic staff at the Open University now questioning the role of the library, and of the professional library staff, the next ten years may result in a very different type of library service. After all in 1982, Mr Simpson himself claimed that the:

> Pattern of services offered will change as experience shows how best the developing needs of the academic staff may be served.
> (p.388)

The Open University network is extensive, and it is reasonable for the Library to limit its service. The number of students accepted each year in the foundation courses would make it a very daunting task to offer even a basic library service to them. In addition many students have ready access to a local tertiary library; and many more have a very good public library service within their home town. I visited several public libraries, and was impressed with the reference reading rooms and the obvious use by tertiary students of those areas. Students enrolled in the Open University's postgraduate programmes, however, may require services from the Library.

It is fair to say I was disappointed in my perception of the Open University model of library liaison. This has been somewhat heralded within Australia as a model for Australian librarians to emulate. Nevertheless I still remain convinced that librarians can play an active role in course preparation through involvement, co-operation and working with the course writers. The chance to observe the Open University model provided me with some insight into correct development of such a role. It is probably true that librarians involved in the activities of a course writing team need particular characteristics; good interpersonal skills,

confidence in their own ability and knowledge; and, experience that gives them the courage of their beliefs in contributing to the course materials. The success of the Open University library service also probably relies on those same characteristics; certainly Sheila Dale, as Chief Liaison Librarian, brings to the University a knowledge and expertise that is evident in the quality library guides that she produces.

1.2.1 Open University Regional Centres

I visited one of the largest Open University Regional Centres, in Leeds and spent some time with the Director, Derek Gains, who has written extensively in the area of library provision for Open University and adult education students. Open University Centres are graciously accommodated, spacious, and well staffed. The only library resources held are sets of the Open University course materials, although the Regional Directors are notionally responsible for arranging access to local libraries for students in their area. One of the original reasons for the establishment of the Centres was to provide students with facilities for viewing Open University television programmes; they are now more important as locations for face-to-face tutorials and counselling. The Leeds Regional Centre has approximately twenty staff as full-time academic appointments, and another 400 part-time staff spread throughout the area at local study centres. There are approximately twenty of these local study centres within that regional area. In addition the Centre has a permanent administrative staff. The part-time tutors are employed, monitored and trained within the region and they have very little contact with the Open University itself. There is a summer school but that too is held in York and not on the Open University campus so the 6,000 students within the region similarly have very little contact with the Open University itself.

Within each Regional Centre, one staff member acts as Library Liaison Officer and is responsible for the negotiation of access to local libraries. Some Centres, or at least those with a Regional Director as committed to libraries as Derek Gains is, produce guides to regional libraries and their collections and maintain close links with the public library services. Again there is very little formal contact with the Open University or the Library. Indeed the Open University Library looks upon the task of arranging access to local libraries as one that belongs with the Regional Centre, and not the responsibility of the Library.

One first-level Open University student I interviewed was fortunate in that she worked in the extramural library at the University of Birmingham so at least had some library access. She lived in a small town outside Birmingham and could attend regular tutorials, held within easy driving distance of her home village. Voluntary induction for new students is held in the local centres and students are given a choice of the centre most convenient to them. They attend tutorials held between seven and nine in the evening, once a week, and each student is assigned a local tutor-counsellor and given his home telephone number, work number and address. Regular meetings are held in this way during the foundation courses, making students independent eventually. For the compulsory week's summer school, students are given a choice of local universities for attendance. Their essays and assignments are posted to their local tutor who reads them, gives a grade and makes appropriate comment.

2 CONTINUING OR EXTRAMURAL EDUCATION

In 1981 Hostler described continuing education as 'Learning which is valued for its own sake ... **worthwhile** rather than **useful**' (p.24). He goes on to describe continuing education courses as 'a distinctively different form of education' (p.57). Continuing, or extramural, education students attend regular classes at a university, or one of its centres, but rarely submit assignments; do not complete examinations, nor receive any accreditation or qualification on completion of a course. One writer in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* described continuing adult education as 'an alarmingly flexible, even volatile category' (10 February, 1984), while another writer felt:

> There are many students in higher education who are in some sense non-traditional. So it makes little sense to treat these students as an exception, an aberration, on the fringe ... non-traditional students should not be registered as a group ... apart from the traditional core.
> (January, 1984)

Charlesworth and Duke, in their review of the continuing education policy and practices of the University of Queensland, commented '... there is no reason why distinctions between credit and non-credit courses should be seen as hard and fast' (1984, p.39). It follows that both categories of student may require library support from their institution.

The Open University offers many continuing education programmes to British residents. They follow the same style as the degree programmes; materials are designed to be sufficient for satisfactory completion of the course. Tight (1983, p.187) has described Open University continuing education programmes as materials designed so that learners of relatively average ability can use them to achieve learning objectives without support. As in Australia, these programmes attract fees and require very little continued support from academic staff. Once they have been designed and produced, the same programmes may be re-used for a number of years. During my stay in 1985, other British universities were considering 'packaged' continuing education courses as a possible attraction for special funding, and there may be greater choice in these courses over the next decade.

In Australia, some institutions are already offering continuing education short courses by external study. They do so, to the best of my knowledge, without any support from the campus library.

Britain has one of the most sophisticated public library systems in the world (Dale and Carty, 1985, p.3); this same description cannot be applied in general to Australian public libraries, although some do meet extremely high standards. In addition:

> It can be said that no town in Britain is without a public library and few villages of any size are likely to be without the service of an issue-point or a mobile library. This is a record which few other countries can equal.
> (Luckham, 1971, p.47).

Certainly it is a record that Australia cannot equal. Therefore, more appropriately, library support for continuing education classes should be of concern to the institutions offering those

courses.

2.1 Extramural Education in British Universities

Thomas (1982) describes university extramural provision as an especially British phenomenon where:

> The traditional role of the Department of Extramural Studies or Adult Education - the terms are interchangeable - is to provide liberal, non-vocational courses which do not generally culminate in examinations. Such courses are organised for the public of the region in which the university stands. ... The result is that thousands of people who might be forgiven for viewing the university as an expensive, arcane institution for the young, now have an experience which may temper that view. The process of extramural education has built up a phalanx of people in the community who begin to understand what the university tries to do, and find that there are stocks of knowledge within it which are interesting and relevant to ordinary people.
> (pp.145-6)

British universities have long experience in providing extramural courses in the evenings, sometimes on the campus, but more usually in or near the student's own home town or village.

During my scholarship tenure, I visited some of those universities which receive funding from the Department of Education and Science as 'responsible bodies' for extramural education.

2.1.1 Responsible Body Status

During 1985, the Department of Education and Science was directly funding twenty-three English universities for costs incurred in offering approved programmes of adult liberal education to their local communities. This 'responsible body' status recognises the adult liberal education provision by the university, and, in the past, the funding has covered seventy-five per cent of approved teaching and related costs; the remaining teaching and administrative costs being met from other university income, such as University Grants Committee (UGC) recurrent funds, student fee income and allocations from other bodies. In addition to their responsible body programmes, extramural departments offer a range of continuing and post-experience provision, funded from university funds or client fees.

The restriction of responsible body status to twenty-three universities is largely historical accident (UGC, 1984, App. 10). All pre-War institutions are responsible bodies; and the universities which are not tend to be either those with a bias towards science and technology or those close to a university which is already covering this field. Almost half the university responsible body courses are in the traditional humanities (archaeology, history, literature, philosophy and appreciation of the arts). These are followed in popularity by social studies and natural sciences. The courses tend to evolve in relation to the interests and capacities of staff and ideally the universities identify new needs and new areas of demand. Some of the

extramural departments work in prisons, with voluntary organisations, with the elderly or unemployed, or with trade union groups such as miners.

In Wales the arrangements are identical to those in England, with the Welsh Office Education Department paying grants to four out of the seven colleges of the University of Wales.

There is no responsible body status in Scotland and Scottish universities are funded under the University Grants Committee system.

In March, 1985 the Department of Education and Science notified all directors of English university extramural departments receiving responsible body funding of new funding arrangements. From 1985-86, direct grants ceased. New arrangements were to be phased in over four years and funding would be based on a formula, related to student contact hours, and total number of students. In addition consideration would be taken of teaching hours drawn from the university's own staff, and financial commitment from the university itself. Extramural departments may apply for special funding for innovative projects. Also some weighting may be given to courses conducted for eleven or more consecutive meetings, and for those conducted away from the campus.

I attended a conference of extramural librarians and administrators, and most of the discussion focused on the new funding forumla. Obviously the Department of Education and Science is trying to ensure that extramural departments become an integral part of the university, by seeking evidence of the university's financial contribution, and staff contribution to extramural education. Some people at the conference likened the new funding formula to 'brownie points'; and almost every department I visited was involved in lengthy meetings, assessing suggestions for 'innovative proposals'. These changes are primarily viewed as threatening the traditional role of extramural education; in a letter from the librarian at the University of Liverpool, this feeling was summarised when he wrote: 'This is the end of an era for us and we are uncertain of what the future holds'.

Extramural education is considered to have as important a role as degree courses by those departments; in his Annual Report of 1982-83, the Director of Extramural Studies at the University of Birmingham wrote:

> The Department's most valuable work will never be, and should never be, a matter of lectures to mass audiences. The optimum conditions for serious academic work are: a sessional course of twenty meetings each of two hours, a dedicated lecturer and some fifteen students, good provision of books and other aids, and reasonably congenial accommodation.

These 'sessional' courses, the most satisfying from academic and personal viewpoints, are considered the most threatened by the new funding formula, with its emphasis on total student numbers. In an internal paper prepared for the Leeds department, the Director also refers to sessional courses (20+weeks), and their requirements for library support:

> Obviously, these courses would not be satisfactory in education terms, unless students were doing some kind of reading outside the course.

2.1.2 Extramural Departments and their Libraries

Of the fifteen universities I visited or contacted, thirteen extramural departments maintained their own library. The staffing levels in the libraries varied considerably. Not all departments employed professionally qualified librarians; some employed a librarian only on a part-time basis and most offered little in the way of support staff. At Leeds University the control of the Library was just one responsibility for a staff tutor with a more than half-time teaching load. At Surrey, one person was employed on a half-time basis to operate the Library as well as to administer the responsible body funding for the department. At Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, again the librarian was only part-time, with occasional help from volunteers. At Birmingham, with two librarians, three assistants and one part-time clerical staff member, the librarian also assumed responsibility for the department's audio-visual equipment and slide production facilities; other departmental libraries have been understandably reluctant to accept this additional role.

The accommodation for the libraries varied just as much. Birmingham has a purpose built library; Oxford had just moved into a newly furnished and attractive area; London is housed in a wooden demountable building; Bristol, Manchester and Sheffield are remote from their department's academic offices; and the libraries at Surrey and Leeds occupy multiple rooms on varying levels in an inconvenient and labour intensive arrangement.

The typical method of library supply, even to classes held on campus (and often in the department's own accommodation), is a quantity of books in a book box. Only two of the libraries I visited did not allow direct borrowing by students, but on the whole personal borrowing is still of little consequence. At the Oxford Department of External Studies, the number of personal loans is substantial owing to their extensive summer school programmes; there is also a reading room open until 10 p.m. every day. In some of the libraries loan figures were not available due to the absence of formal statistics or records. In several of the libraries personal loans were only available for limited number of hours, owing to staffing restrictions. At Birmingham, with sufficient staff to avoid this, the library closes over the lunch period, thereby denying students and staff access to the collection at that time.

The method of recording books supplied in book boxes, and for recording individual loans within classes, varies a little between the libraries, but all methods are based on a manual system. In general, records are kept of the books supplied in a book box and in most libraries, these individual book box records are not interfiled, which does provide some difficulty in tracking down a particular book. For recording student loans, the library supplies student cards or book cards in each box and loans are largely based on the honour system. Loss from book boxes is, on an average, one or two items per box; this results in, for example, 900 missing items at the University of London in one year; 96 at Newcastle; 150 at Sheffield; and 316 at Birmingham.

Transportation of book boxes to extramural classes is costly; most libraries use road freight for some if not all boxes at costs of up to eight pounds per box. Often tutors are requested to return boxes; often the librarians collect them, sometimes in their own time.

Most librarians purchase books as requested by individual tutors, though sometimes book lists are checked by the appropriate staff tutor. The University of London has adopted a policy of purchasing within subject areas, using book selection committees; tutors must tailor their library recommendations to resources already held. The great proportion of all extramural

tutors work on a part-time basis; they are rarely members of the university community. For example, of the 17,000 academic staff members within the University of London system, only thirty or so from other departments teach extramural classes. The Department of Education and Science new funding formula, with its emphasis on extra 'brownie points' for classes taught by university staff, may change this situation.

Several libraries used to produce accessions or holdings lists for use by tutors but decreased funds limited their production. The University of Nottingham had begun entering, by broad subject, all titles onto a microcomputer and providing annual subject lists to all tutors. Other extramural libraries were likely to follow this development, and this should make it easier for classes to be tutored to the existing collections. This is particularly important in view of declining book budgets.

Some of the departments maintained separate collections for their adult education students - that is, those students enrolled in accredited courses at certificate, diploma or degree level. Leeds for example had three collections; one for extramural students, another for adult education students and yet another for students enrolled in applied social studies. I was not so concerned with library provision to these students who really fall into the Australian category of part-time, rather than extramural, students. It was interesting, if alarming, to discover that at Birmingham where a part-time degree course had been introduced by the University, the extramural library had assumed responsibility for those students; lectures were held each evening on the campus but the main library ceased lending so early that students were unable to access its resources. The extramural library provided book boxes to those classes; this imposes serious limitations on library resources for those part-time students.

All students enrolled in award bearing courses are granted access to central university libraries. Extramural students generally are not. In his comparative assessment of services in Britain the United States, Fisher (1978) commented:

> Access to some of the finest academic libraries in the world, with all that this implies, is a privilege denied to most extramural students in the U.K.
> (p.75)

I was therefore especially interested in visiting the University of Kent in Canterbury, and the University of Warwick; in both of these universities, full responsibility for extramural education had been only recently accepted, and I was hopeful of finding a different approach to the supply of a library service to staff and students.

The University of Kent only assumed full responsibility for extramural provision in that County in 1975; prior to this date, the area was covered by Oxford University, where the Department of External Studies packed and transported book boxes to classes throughout the County of Kent. The University chose not to establish an extramural library as the responsibility for book box supply to extramural classes was accepted by the Kent County Library. However, in 1985 the County felt it had no option but to withdraw this library support. The County held 10,000 volumes in multiple copies in a special extramural collection, and from this provided about eighty-five book boxes each year. They had dedicated a part-time professional librarian, with support staff, to this role, but with the departure of that librarian, during 1985, the Library was advised by the County office that the position could not be refilled. Funds were no longer available to purchase additional volumes for the extramural collection. In addition, the Library was sensitive about their role in the eyes of

their taxpayers; they accepted the tradition that a public library is designed to serve an individual who comes into the library and not a group meeting away from the library. The County Library was happy to transfer the collection to the School of Continuing Education, or disperse it amongst the County libraries, thus allowing extramural students access to all resources when they visited their local libraries.

The School of Continuing Education had begun their deliberations on the future of library support. In accordance with all the extramural departments I visited, they too affirmed the belief that reading is an essential part of any course offered by a university. At the time of my visit, their dilemma was unresolved but it seemed that the University of Kent Library was unlikely to assist; while they provided some services to part-time students enrolled with the School, they interpreted their role as offering help to the full-time, undergraduate on-campus student. This seems particularly sad when realising that the University's central Library is only paces from the School of Continuing Education; in the past the County Library had delivered book boxes to classes held within that School. Students travelling to the University and to the School of Continuing Education for their classes, are denied access to the central Library, only those few steps away.

The University of Warwick received responsible body status for extramural education in late 1984. Prior to that date, their rather small geographical area had been provided for by the University of Birmingham. An initial step in building up appropriate library resources was the allocation of thirty thousand pounds for expenditure in the University Library. At the time of my visit, the University Library was following the traditional book box method in meeting the resource needs of their 'open studies' students, though this was to come under review with the recent appointment of a new director to the Department, and some changes in the structure of continuing education in that University. However, it is disappointing that the Library chose to maintain the traditional extramural service. A large proportion of the thirty thousand pounds was spent on the purchase of book boxes, carpeting and furnishing of a basement room within the library building, staff for the packing of book boxes, and the remaining small amount on purchasing books in multiple copies. They had the opportunity to offer a more innovative service but have largely ignored the challenge presented to them, and preserved 'the cargo cult of the book box dropping in from the sky' (Newman, 1984, p.41).

Strathclyde University in Glasgow did present a different model. The Continuing Education Centre there facilitates and offers administrative support for short courses, certificate and part-time degree programmes offered by individual teaching departments. The majority of short courses are vocationally based; the traditional adult education classes are largely left to the University of Glasgow. All students enrolled in post experience vocational education classes receive a library card, and full borrowing privileges from the University Library. In addition, librarians attend some classes to provide reader education sessions.

Table 4: Statistical Summary of Some British University Extramural Libraries, 1983-84

Place	Academic Staff in Dept	Library Staff		Book Stock Excl. Scores Records etc	Purchasing Allocation in £ Strlg	Direct Loans	Annual Book Box Loans	
		Professional	Support				Boxes	Books
Birmingham	22	2	3 F/T 1 P/T	100,000	13,683	735	562	15,718
Bristol	24	1/2	1/2 (temp)	40,000	5,000	No figure available	c. 200	c. 6,000
Leeds	38	1/2	1 F/T 1 P/T 1 P/T temp	50,000	10,500*	No figure available	c. 120	No figure available
London	30	1	3	200,000	8,000	No direct lending	587	No figure available
Manchester	28	1	4/5	40,000	6,405	No figure available	146	2,622
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	9	1/2	-	17,800**	2,173	1,218	86	3,688
Nottingham	33	1	2 P/T	100,000	7,000	982	c. 320	10,793
Oxford	18	2	1	78,396	20,350	5,833***	173	8,184
Sheffield	n/a	1/2	1 P/T	c. 35,000	10,830*	513	c. 70	8,880
Surrey	10	1/4	-	9,000	1,200	No direct lending	170	c. 3,400

* In these institutions part or all of the extramural purchasing allocation is met by the central university library.

** A fire in 1979 destroyed most stock and this is gradually building up again.

*** Oxford has a large summer school programme when additional staff are employed to handle direct loans from the Library.

2.2 Extramural Students and the Role of Libraries

Very few of the extramural departments had conducted any research into their students, or assessed demand for courses. Courses seem to be offered through a specified interest of a tutor, and not really to meet demand from potential or present students; this has been described by Newman as 'the set-'em-up-and-see method' (1979, p.16). Some of the departments have the information required to assess student needs, but lack of staff prevent them from doing so. The changes in funding from the Department of Education and Science, with a new emphasis on student numbers, may result in departments finding the staff to carry out this valuable research, and in courses being constructed and offered to meet student demand.

The University of London was the only department I visited which had researched their student body; they have also reported and published the results.

This survey received a high response rate by those enrolled in extramural courses who wanted to widen their interests, to find out more about the topic offered, or use the course as preparation for future study. This response would seem to indicate that library support is a valued and required element in extramural courses.

Table 5: Extramural Students at University of London
Reasons Given for Attending Courses

Response Rate	Reason
64%	to widen interests
62%	to find out more about topic
54%	for pleasure
34%	meet people with similar interests
31%	carry on from earlier courses
14%	to get academic qualifications
11%	for help with work
9%	preparation for future study

Source: Whitaker, Sally (1984), 'Extra-mural Students: A Survey', *Adult Education*, **57(3)**, p.223.

2.2.1 The Role of Academic Libraries

Recently Australia has seen some relaxation in the former opposition from academic libraries to allow access and borrowing privileges to distance education students from other institutions. Most, if not all, colleges of advanced education permit this, and a variety of customs exist within the universities.

Some institutions allow external students to use the photocopying services and reference collections only; others generously grant full borrowing privileges; others grant some privileges but charge a fee of up to $30; some demand letters of introduction from the student's home institution; and happily, several of the university and college libraries are reviewing their past restrictions on use of the libraries by external students.

Today, perhaps even more than in the past, almost all libraries are under pressure from their existing readers and library staff who have little time to spare, feel quite naturally that their first duty is towards the clientele of their own institution (Dale and Carty, 1985, p.5). But many libraries, without statistical evidence to the contrary, over-estimate the demands that will be placed upon them by external students of other institutions.

The University of Queensland, for example, in 1983 allowed undergraduate borrowing privileges for students enrolled in other institutions on a trial basis; in fact, the computer-recorded loan statistics showed that this borrowing was a very smalll proportion of overall library loans, and the staff felt quite able to cope in extending the facilities. In 1985, 112

total loans.

2.2.2 The Role of Public Libraries

In the context of continuing education, the role of public libraries is perhaps traditionally stronger. This tradition will no doubt continue, because:

> In the 1980s and 1990s, the public libraries can no longer afford to ignore the fact that continuing education is likely to become an endemic feature of what some have seen as the learning society.
> (*Adult Education and Public Libraries in the 1980's: A Symposium*, 1980, p.67).

However, the role of public libraries extends beyond the provision of books or accommodation for distance and continuing education students. Some interesting research has been completed in Britain on the ability and appropriateness of public librarians in providing education guidance to adult learners. Potential students need accurate, up-to-date, objective and comprehensive advice about the many education opportunities available to them.

> Public libraries lend themselves to publicising and information-giving ... because they reach that section of the public from whom the motivated learner is most likely to be drawn.
> (Percy and Willett, 1981, p.46)

As one example, Sutton Library in London, regularly holds an education advisory service in the Library. Each July and August, there is a 'market-place' atmosphere, where prospective students can discuss their aspirations with counsellors from a number of educational organisations. The Oxfordshire County Libraries produce an index of adult education courses, institutions and referral offices able to provide information on courses throughout Oxfordshire. This is produced as a collaborative project, by the County Library, the Local Education Authority, the Colleges of Further Education and Technical Colleges in Oxfordshire, and the Open University (Southern Region). The index is designed for use in conjunction with the printed leaflets and brochures produced by course organisers. At Bradford, the Library maintains a computer database of educational activities, for consultation by residents. And through PRESTEL, librarians can consult the national computerised Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Service (ECCTIS), for help with enquiries on:

* what subjects are offered
* where they are offered
* the various levels attainable in each subject
* whether the courses are available for full-time, part-time or external study.

2.2.3 ECCTIS and UDACE

The Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service (ECCTIS), operates in Britain through funding from the Department of Education and Science, and is located within the Open University. It was set up initially under a three year contract, as a national computerised service to produce information about courses in further and higher education. Enquiries may be directed to ECCTIS by letter or telephone, or through PRESTEL. In 1985, they were planning to have microfiche packs available on annual subscription, with a comprehensive index providing quick access to the appropriate course details.

In March 1985, the Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education (UDACE) produced a valuable discussion document *Helping Adults to Learn A Consultative Document on Educational Guidance for Adults.* This report describes the need for educational guidance, the role of networks, and their organisation, management and resourcing needs. The document was distributed widely, and submissions, debates, references and discussion invited. In 1986 the results and recommendations were published in *The Challenge of Change: Developing Educational Guidance for Adults.*

2.2.4 Library Co-operation

In addition, in Britain there are several committees working to foster co-operative relationships between extramural departments and local libraries. The Library Association has a standing committee on libraries and continuing education; the East Midlands Joint Committee on Libraries and Adult Education has published (1978) an excellent illustrated booklet *Reading Lists for Adult Education Classes: Do's and Don'ts for Tutors (especially don'ts)*, which could be adapted by other libraries; and there is an active group, Public Libraries and Adult Education Committee of the Northwest region, which regularly publishes the results of research into the library needs and support for adult education classes.

This group also published *Guidelines for Co-operation*, to facilitate better understanding between extramural departments and public libraries. In this document, they make the following valid points:

> The basic function of a public library is the preservation and dissemination of recorded knowledge and experience of man kind, but there are all sorts of other tasks that it **may** perform ... Although it is not an **essential** function of a public library that it should be involved in cultural and educational work, the contribution it can make in this sphere is society at large, and the library itself.
> (p.10)

In Australia too, we need to explore the involvement of public or other local libraries in educational guidance. Newman, commissioned in 1984 to review co-operation between public libraries and adult education providers in N.S.W., noted that often contact between the two services is unplanned.

As Thatcher Librarian at the University of Queensland, I was also responsible for staff, collections and services in the University's six regional study centres throughout Queensland.

In my 1983 Annual Report, I noted that there was a need for review of the positions and duties of the librarians in those local centres:

> While their major duty remains the efficient running of the library, a large proportion of their time is consumed by student queries. The librarians are often the only people in the Centre at the advertised opening times. They are confronted with questions on specific subjects, courses, career planning, quotas, tertiary enrolments, etc. etc.

It was obvious they needed some guidance and training from the University, in order to respond accurately and objectively to these queries.

Perhaps it is possible to offer, even by distance education, some training to librarians in regional centres and small towns, so that they are able to respond to questions concerning educational opportunities.

3 THE FUTURE IN AUSTRALIA

The institutional library's role in offering support services to distance education and continuing education (extramural) students still requires clarification, evaluation and review in both Britain and Australia. The developments to date in both countries rest largely on the interest and enthusiasm of a group of individuals, but enhancement of services requires institutional support as well.

I returned to Australia with a more comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the role of continuing education within universities. The pattern of extramural library services in Britain has developed over many years, and during periods of generous funding. It would be impractical to consider that Australian universities should follow the British model of separate and extensive extramural libraries. In addition, the majority of Australian continuing education students attend classes on-campus. Nevertheless they still may require and seek library support and institutions should recognise and foster this need by opening the doors of the library to **all** enrolled students.

The Library Association of Australia's Special Interest Group on Distance Education must consult with the Public Libraries Divisions in each state on the roles of institutional libraries and public libraries in meeting the information needs of off-campus students. No matter how good the service from the home institution, students prefer to consult library resources themselves and so inevitably turn to public libraries. The assistance of the public library in providing library back-up to off-campus students has largely been ignored by the education sector, and by the public library sector.

The development of public libraries as education guidance centres also needs to be fully explored by professional groups and associations. The Library Association, and distance education organisations such as the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (ASPESA) could initiate disucssion, research and co-operation in this field; working parties could explore the training needs and equipment requirements and predict possible workloads,

then widely disseminate their findings to allow frank criticism and to encourage eventual support.

Given that the Australian situation is geographically quite different to that in Britain, and that our public libraries development is, on the whole, less strong, we should also look at other libraries spreading in a network over the country to provide support for students, and guidance to potential students. These suggestions do not lessen the role of the home institution, but they do ensure a collaborative support scheme that enriches the learning experience for Australia's off-campus students.

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APPENDIX

Institutions Visited in Britain

Chesterfield Public Library
Exeter Central Library
Harrod's Library Service
Kent County Library
Open University, Centre for Continuing Education
Open University, Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service (ECCTIS)
Open University, Faculty of Educational Studies
Open University, International Documentation Centre on Distance Learning
Open University, Library
Open University, Regional Centre at Leeds
Oxford Central Library
Sheffield City Library
Sheffield Polytechnic Libraries
Sutton Borough Library
Tameside Library Service, Ashton-Under-Lyne
University College of Wales at Aberystwyth, Department of Extramural Studies
University of Birmingham, Department of Extramural Studies
University of Birmingham, Library
University of Bristol, Department of Extra Mural Studies
University of Bristol, Library
University of Glasgow, Department of Adult and Continuing Education
University of Glasgow, Library and Undergraduate Reading Room
University of Kent at Canterbury, School and Continuing Education
University of Leeds, Department of Adult and Continuing Education
University of London, Department of Extramural Studies
University of London, Secretary for External Students
University of London, Senate House Library
University of Manchester, Department of Adult and Higher Education
University of Manchester, Department of Extramural Studies
University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Department of Adult Education
University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Library
University of Nottingham, Department of Adult Education
University of Nottingham, Library
University of Oxford, Bodleian Library
University of Oxford, Department of External Studies
University of Sheffield, Division of Continuing Education
University of Sheffield, Library
University of Strathclyde, Continuing Education Centre
University of Strathclyde, Library
University of Surrey, Department of Educational Studies
University of Surrey, Guildford Institute
University of Surrey, Library
University of Warwick, Department of Adult and Continuing Education
University of Warwick, Library

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3. *A Survey of the Counselling Needs of External Students at the University of Queensland, 1980* by H.W. Thiele.

4. *Video as Supplementary Material. The Impact of an Alternative Development of Study Materials in Solving Formal Economic Problems* by W. Laaser in collaboration with J. Bartels, H. Klein, F.J. Mattes, U. Rossie.

5. *Charlatans, Knowledge, Curriculum and Phenomenological Research* by Donald Vandenberg.

6. *The 'Discipline' of English in the Eighties* by C. Castan, K.G. Hamilton, Dan O'Neill and M. Hollington.

7* *The First Twenty Years of the Maryborough and District University Society 1963-1983* by F.T. Borchardt.

8* *A Report on Some Continuing Education and Independent Study Programmes in North America* by J.R. Laverty.

9. *Audio Tapes for Distance Education* by D. Meacham and B. Butler.

10. *A Survey of Use and Evaluation of Support Services by External Students* by M.E. Kelly.

* Copies of these titles are no longer available.